

Q134

Please explain why you have not reported this potential lapse in scientific integrity.

- 1 (b) (5)
- 2 It was made very clear to staff and managers not to report issues and be "labeled." In more than one instance, Senior Leaders themselves made clear that complaints were not welcomed.
- 3 Don't know who to report this to and fear that the Division Director would be upset that I reported this if they found out
- 4 With how much work is going on I barely would have the time to give it my full attention. Small potential lapses are commonplace so that it would be a full time job just reporting on them.
- 5 The issue was not going to be heard openly.
- 6 Retaliations. Not having confidence that any action will be taken.
- 7 the rule is taking so long to be final that I gave up
- 8 Managers know about it and are part of it. They do nothing and are supported by higher managers. They get awards and promotions for what they do or don't do.
- 9 It'd be career suicide! Relying on 3rd parties to sue the EPA
- 10 (b) (5)
- 11 I raised my concerns to my colleagues and they chose to not remedy these due to difference in scientific opinion.
- 12 Fear of retaliation and damage to my career and future opportunities.
- 13 I have nobody to support me and fight for me. (b) (6)
- 14 would not have seemed to make a difference under the circumstances
- 15 Didn't occur to me. Now it does.
- 16 The SI Office does not have proper authority to address these issues.
- 17 These were things that were already in the news and reported widely.
- 18 No action because culprits have protection from headquarters office.
- 19 (b) (6), (b) (5)
- 20 I have been paying close attention to climate research and there are good reasons to believe that climate models are flawed. At EPA, the "climate crisis" is like a religion. There's no point in questioning it.
- 21 ...
- 22 I do not believe that anything could have been done about it.
- 23 It was well known in the (b) (6) that the political appointee leadership was holding back a report for several years that was finally released in early 2021.
- 24 I brought them up on the last scientific integrity survey. It is possible that a colleague already had.
- 25 What's the point? I don't believe it is truly anonymous. The offenders are never punished. The culture doesn't change, but you get labelled as a troublemaker. Many would fall into the policy exemption. Sometimes these offenses were committed by scientific integrity officials themselves.
- 26 I was not directly involved with the study that was suppressed I was also not working for the agency when the neglect initially happened. I do work with Tribes that are effected directly by these decisions.
- 27 Senior political appointees in last administration regularly disregarded (b) (6) scientific input in favor of political agenda.
- 28 Nothing will be done especially if a manuscript has been published by EPA (sweep it under the rug)
- 29 I reported to my managers but they did not encourage reporting it further.
- 30 (b) (5)
- 31 I participated on national workgroups. The analysis/recommendations from regional experts in the field was ignored for political gain. Did not report due to fear of retaliation.
- 32 I haven't felt that it was necessary to make those waves. I pick and choose my battles and other things were more important for me and my career.
- 33 I have told the person responsible for the data in the hopes that they will correct things.
- 34 (b) (6) management does not take QA seriously and the has a culture of noncompliance that has filtered down to the staff. (b) (5) I haven't reported it as 1) I'm not sure how to articulate the problem in a way that can be investigated, and 2) I would be blackballed and my career ruined.
- 35 Because the Agency does not have effective vehicles in place to prevent/discourage these practices. These specific issues are relatively wide-spread within the Agency and are reflective of the general culture that is encouraged by little meaningful guidance and numerous other limitations/challenges placed on researchers in concert with ever increasing expectations for the production of deliverables. The nature of the Agency's intramural research funding process also supports these practices due to the regularly erratic nature of intramural funding and lack of alignment of Agency funding policies/practices with the nature/requirements of research.
- 36 1. i did not know who i would report this to 2. there is no way to report this and be anonymous when staff are basically the only person assigned to their projects. 3. the issues were with political leadership from the previous administration, and they were implementing their agenda. what difference would it make to report these issues?
- 37 Fear for career consequences.
- 38 Was hoping we could resolve it without resorting to that. Reporting it will definitely upset the managers above me and make my life difficult. No effective way to report it anonymously since I am so closely tied to the work product.
- 39 Low anticipation of resolution - political pressure abounded
- 40 Reporting the violation would have harmed the relevant staff without producing a changed result.
- 41 I am scared of retaliation
- 42 A manager approved a decision made by another agency that was grounded in poor science and will be environmentally damaging. I only heard about his second-hand, I did not observe it directly myself - other people familiar with the details would have had the responsibility to report it.
- 43 I have reported them under the EEOC process I believe the decision I was given continues to violate scientific integrity.
- 44 Didn't know that I could, didn't trust my managers, fear of retribution. (b) (6), (b) (5)
- 45 If I reported my concerns to management, I do not believe they would pass them on and not take any action. They would relabel my concerns not as scientific integrity concerns but as my failure to support procedure. Management does not encourage dissent and does not respect that employees have a limited amount of work hours. Management asking staff to spend 4 hours a week on paperwork does not directly or immediately affect them, but it affects staff productivity and morale.
- 46 EPA has no effective process for evaluating the performance of its management. Evaluations are performed by managers to assess staff performance but there is no corresponding assessment of managers by their professional staff.
- 47 Didn't think anything would happen to fix the issues.

48 Did not expect a response and fear of retaliation

49 there is no evidence that management or political appointees other than (b) (6) take scientific integrity seriously

50 Sometimes it is just faster to bow to interference than to try to report it. Also, year ago, I made a non-official compliant, just reported some issues. It had no effect. People were talked to, but no affect on outcome. When you have serious doubts about speed and effectiveness of reporting, what is the point?

51 I didn't have a good specific issue to bring. The prioritization of timeliness over all other factors was being pushed by senior EPA management and created a culture where correct scientific decisions could not be made, but I did not have an obvious and specific illustration of this behavior.

52 At the time, I did not realize it was a conflict of interest. Now that the political appointments are gone, and I have taken some time to absorb and process what happened, I realized it was a conflict of interest.

53 Fear of reprisal and not sure issue was of significant level to risk my reputation or career over.

54 Fear of retaliation, unsure of all the data on the matter, did not think it would do any good, scientific integrity office overworked.

55 Some political appointees feel like they have conflicts of interest and should not have been appointed, but they were and it doesn't seem like you can do anything after the fact. In other cases, I'm not sure when differing scientific opinions constitute a breach of integrity. Management often overruled staff on scientific judgements, but I cannot say that the management was necessarily wrong in their conclusion.

56 I attended one of the Scientific Integrity Official's Q&A sessions a couple of years ago and heard about the parsing of the situation that needs to happen. I didn't think that it was an egregious enough potential lapse that it merited reporting. (I did report to my supervisors and we are working it out.)

57 (b) (6), (b) (5) Ultimately, the decision was not mine to make.

58 I have not reported because policy is often confused with scientific integrity in my program - (b) (6) - in my mind. It's a difficult program and is based in science, with policy weighing in mostly based on court decisions or political appointees.

59 I was not aware of procedures to do so. Also, fear of retribution and career jeopardy is always a concern.

60 Did not know who to report these issues to and the fear of retaliation.

61 political appointees were running the show. I was primary income earner for my family at the time--not worth the risk

62 The case was not pursued by the Region for political reasons, but was referred to the state, who pursued enforcement.

63 Fear of retaliation. Anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. (b) (6), (b) (5) I think the rest of us got the message.

64 Because while my technical opinion was requested, it was not responded to or accepted, and without an explanation, so I thought it was the manager's prerogative to do so.

65 it occurred very quickly in the midst of a policy discussion. no time

66 It would be difficult to prove since it was a team effort across two divisions and I think the other divisions work would actually be where the integrity lapse occurred. (b) (5)

67 Did not feel supported by my management based on how previous complaints were ignored.

68 I did not believe there would be recourse.

69 Not accepted by the current 'consensus' or agenda

70 Not worth the time and blowback (which would be informal, not clearly related to the delay)

71 Supervisors are not supportive.

72 I lack confidence in the scientific integrity process due to not having a satisfactory resolution with respect to earlier allegations.

73 Lack of knowledge about how the process worked and what types of scientific integrity issues could be reported. I also had a general feeling that the media was doing a good job highlighting issues happening inside the Agency, so why bother reporting it when it is generally well-known by everyone? It blows my mind the SIO and OIG don't appear to read media articles, because they are usually very accurate.

74 I didn't feel comfortable reporting it.

75 fear

76 I was vocal at meetings in my division and wrote a memo for the record that is probably still in the SharePoint for the committee of concern. However, since none of my 1st or 2nd level managers seem to know what to do about it, and others in the committee did not agree with me, I thought maybe there was a failure of communication, rather than a real scientific disagreement. I immediately stopped my work on, and asked my name to be removed from the work product in question, and that request was accepted by my 1st and 2nd line supervisors. That was enough for me. After that incident, I've had no other issues expressing my scientific opinions or incorporating them into work products.

77 Fear of retaliation

78 Everyone knows about it.

79 Long standing disagreement with how program management has and currently views data quality. Program management view is effort devoted towards and improvements in data quality is the same as collecting and presenting quality data. After fighting the embedded culture for years, I find it more productive and a whole lot less stressful, to approach the situation thru educating consumers of the data often 1 user at a time.

80 One of many reports that were being held up. Everyone up and down the management chain knew.

81 Fear.

82 It was reported by others as per internal discussions.

83 This seems to be standard practice at EPA. It takes months to get research submitted to a journal for peer review and publication once you take into account an audit by a (b) (6) and review by numerous managers and internal reviewers

84 No one seemed to be willing early on to push back against the lies leveled at our testing and then it became too political.

85 large project and I felt it would have been in vain

86 Didn't know i could do it anonymously and didn't think anything would come of it other than maybe trouble for me

87 It was not my report and was in a different office.

88 Have not seen evidence to show that accountability for such lapses in scientific integrity truly occurs.

89 fear of retaliation

90 retribution concern

91 At the time it was useless as the appointees tended to block or ignore any issues that were brought forward

92 Systemic issue under previous White House governance

93 gave up

94 I did not feel comfortable voicing the issues due to fear of retaliation. 1st line manager is not supportive of staff.

95 Widespread, reported by others

96 There was nothing that could be done to address the issues

97 Staff members did not want me to pursue.

98 waste of time, no one was going to treat seriously

99 I had no faith that the reporting would help the situation. I would expect retaliation.

100 Because nothing happened when I reported more significant issues previously when I was in (b) (6). Several colleagues had same experience. I do not have faith in the system.

101 The managers are all in on it.

102 Discussed the issue with our deputy scientific integrity official. Rectified the situation when the new administration came in

103 Because these were common knowledge.

104 EPA management stopped R&D efforts during the election period to avoid negative press for the administration. How do you report the administrator?

105 the personal cost is too high, and there are not well established protections for reporting.

106 1. was not aware that you could report something anonymously 2. employees were so inundated with (bad) policy changes and decisions that lacked scientific integrity that it would have been difficult to report all or any. When someone did speak up about filing a complaint, they were quickly shot down or encouraged not to. The mentality was keep your head down and do the best you can for the current circumstances.

107 Addressed more directly without ever using the term "Scientific Integrity". Overall review of form/information resources and SOP will result. Hopefully we will all land on the same page.

108 I tend to try solving my problems myself. Learning about your office has made me think I should contact your office. Based on what I have learned these last 20 years, we, humans and animals are in bad shape. We can't continue like this. EPA needs to be much more pro-active (Precautionary Principle).

109 retaliation

110 The attitude was about "picking your battles". The hurdles to complete the additional policy reviews conflicted with the publisher's timeline. My decision was "to get the science out" in a peer-reviewed forum, so I removed my name (and EPA affiliation) in order for the work to proceed. My steering guidance from above (beyond FLS and DD) was given verbally, so no written documentation.

111 Again, I don't know what has/has not been reported. Secondly, decisions on (b) (6) were made and not communicated so it's not clear where the lapse occurred?